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SUBJECT: SINGAPORE SUPPORTS MAINTAINING THE TCG'S AUTHORITY
IN BURMA

REF: SECSTATE 27325

Classified By: E/P COUNSELOR IKE REED FOR REASONS 1.4 (B/D)

¶1. (C) Poloff urged the Government of Singapore to weigh in with the Government of Burma to maintain the Tripartite Core Group's (TCG) existing authority and to discourage the GOB from imposing any further conditions on the activities and travel of international NGOs or diplomatic personnel in the Irrawaddy Delta (reftel) during a meeting with MFA Southeast Asia Deputy Director Desmond Ng March 24. Poloff also stressed that the United States has strong concerns about the weakening of the TCG, and the impact such changes may have on the flow and transparency of assistance to the Delta.

¶12. (C) Ng responded that Singapore strongly supports the concept of the TCG and agrees with the U.S. position to maintain the TCG's authority. Noting that Burmese Prime Minister Thein Sein just completed a "successful" visit to Singapore, Ng said the "atmospherics are right" for urging Burma to reconsider its decision to restrict the TCG's authority. Ng suggested the Singapore delegation to the upcoming ASEAN-related summits (ASEAN Plus 3 and the East Asia Summit) in Pattaya would have an opportunity to meet with the Burmese delegation to discuss the issue. Ng added that it would be "incoherent" to curb the TCG's authority, given Burma's recent decision to extend the TCG for one year.

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